

from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano by Olaudah Equiano
Selection Test A

Critical Reading *Identify the letter of the choice that best answers the question.*

- ___ 1. What does Equiano describe in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*?
- A. the loss of his African culture
 - B. the ocean journey on a slave ship
 - C. the struggle to abolish slavery
 - D. the sea life he observed on board
- ___ 2. How does *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* describe slavery?
- A. with anger
 - B. with confusion
 - C. with acceptance
 - D. with humor
- ___ 3. In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Equiano mentions “many of the inhabitants of the deep” who were happier than he was. Who or what is he describing?
- A. the slaves asleep in the ship’s hold
 - B. the slaves who jumped into the sea
 - C. the fish and other ocean creatures
 - D. the slave traders asleep in their cabins
- ___ 4. Why did Olaudah Equiano write *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*?
- A. to contrast life in Africa and Barbados
 - B. to entertain readers with sea stories
 - C. to persuade readers of slavery’s evil
 - D. to inform readers about marine life
- ___ 5. Which detail would probably be left out of a summary of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*?
- A. The crew ate the fish they caught.
 - B. Most slaves were kept in the ship’s hold.
 - C. The ship’s conditions were terrible.
 - D. Many slaves were infected with disease.

- ___ 6. Which is the best summary of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*?
- A. The journey went from Africa to North America.
 - B. The ocean crossings were horrible for slaves.
 - C. Equiano escaped being chained because he was ill.
 - D. The air on slave ships was filthy.
- ___ 7. What gives *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* its strength?
- A. its poetic words and figures of speech
 - B. its similarity to an African folk tale
 - C. its power as a personal account
 - D. its logical arguments against slavery
- ___ 8. “Necessary tubs” were used for people’s basic needs in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. What were they?
- A. tubs of fish
 - B. lifeboats
 - C. food containers
 - D. toilets
- ___ 9. In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, why did slaves jump off the ship?
- A. They preferred death to slavery.
 - B. They hoped to swim to shore.
 - C. They wanted to give others more room.
 - D. They hoped to find another boat.
- ___ 10. In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, why didn’t the slaves want to leave the ship in Barbados?
- A. They were afraid they would be eaten.
 - B. They were afraid they would get lost.
 - C. They were afraid they would be sent home.
 - D. They were afraid they would not know anyone.
- ___ 11. If you were summarizing the end of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, which of the following would you use as the main idea?
- A. The traders shouted with joy when they reached Barbados.
 - B. Old slaves reassured the new captives.
 - C. The Africans in Barbados spoke many languages.
 - D. When the ship landed, the slaves were sold to buyers.

- ___ 12. In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, what does Equiano remember that helped him learn more about how sailors travel?
- A. listening to a drum signal the slaves' sale
 - B. looking through the quadrant to find land
 - C. being put into the merchant's yard
 - D. seeing ships in the Barbados harbor
- ___ 13. Why did the crew stop the slaves from jumping overboard in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*?
- A. They didn't want the slaves to escape.
 - B. They didn't want to end the voyage.
 - C. They didn't want the slaves to swim.
 - D. They didn't want the captain to get angry.

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 14. In which sentence is the meaning of the word *avarice* suggested?
- A. The dreadful air caused illness.
 - B. Slave buyers wanted to make money.
 - C. The slaves wanted the extra fish.
 - D. Many planters came to Barbados.
- ___ 15. Which of the following sentences contains a verb in the passive voice?
- A. One day they took a number of fishes.
 - B. Two of the wretches were drowned.
 - C. The whites on board gave a great shout.
 - D. We did not know what to think of this.

Essay

16. Why do you think the slave traders filled their ships with so many Africans? They must have known that there was too little room for so many people and that many would die. Write a brief essay that explains why they might have made this decision.
17. Consider the kinds of skills Olaudah Equiano must have had in order to write this narrative of his time on board the slave ship. Write a brief essay to discuss the skills he would have had to have or develop.